

✓ Segregation
Virginia

November 17, 1958

Honorable H. Lester Hooker
State Corporation Commission
Richmond, Virginia

Dear Lester:

I thank you so much for your letter of the 14th which I received today.

I am convinced that if the Negro schools were closed, the rank and file Negroes would put so much pressure on the agitators that they would be weeded out and succumb to local pressure. It seems to me that under the present law the local authorities - that is, the local school boards, the local boards of supervisors and city councils - could act and refuse to furnish money to keep the Negro schools operating while the white schools are closed. It seems to me that these localities whose schools are now closed could do this if they so desire.

I think now is the time for all of us to stand together more firmly than ever and I am convinced if we get the proper leadership we can yet beat back this invasion by the Federal judicial oligarchy.

Hoping to see you soon and with kindest regards,
I am

Sincerely yours,

WMA/bc

W. M. Abbitt

CC: Senator Harry F. Byrd
Hon. W. M. Tuck

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

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STATE CORPORATION COMMISSION

November 14, 1958

Honorable Watkins M. Abbitt
Appomattox, Virginia

Dear Watt:

I was glad to see your statement in the paper in regard to the closing of schools for white children and leaving the colored children in school. This has been most astounding to me. I spoke to the Governor about it before the schools were closed and since then I have spoken to several members of the General Assembly and Bill Tuck and have written Senator Byrd. It is hard for me to understand why the General Assembly, after having had two special sessions and two general sessions, overlooked such an important matter.

I was told by a man from Norfolk on the 18th of October that in his opinion if the schools for the negroes had been closed when the white schools were, the resentment of it would have been so strong against those who had their children entered in white schools that the negroes themselves would have put the pressure on them to withdraw their applications. It has been inconceivable to me all along that the white children should be on the streets and the negroes go unmolested to their schools. It seems to me that a law should be passed that where negroes have left their own schools to enter a white school which caused the white school to be closed, that the school from which the negroe children came should also be closed. We are not engaged in any tea party. We are in a real battle and we have got to "fight the devil with fire."

I hope that you will press this matter strongly because I have heard so many complaints about this identical matter.

With every good wish, I am,

Sincerely yours,

H. Lester Hooker
H. Lester Hooker

HLH:cg

cc: Senator Harry F. Byrd
Honorable William M. Tuck